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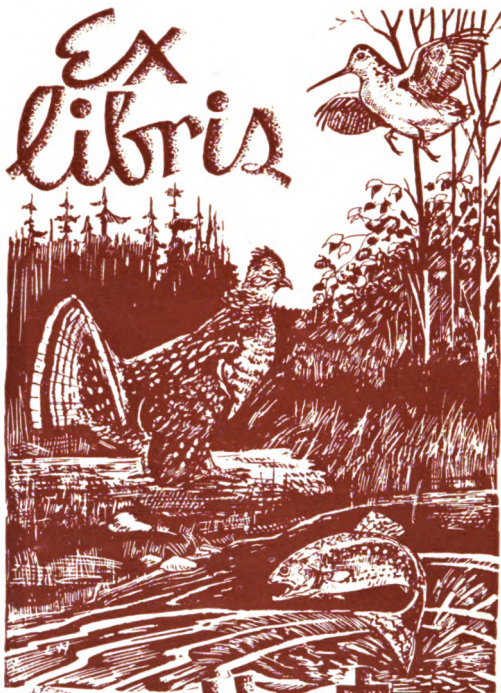
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THE
ANGLER'S DESIDERATUM,

CONTAINING

THE BEST AND FULLEST DIRECTIONS FOR
DRESSING THE ARTIFICIAL FLY;

WITH

SOME NEW AND VALUABLE INVENTIONS

BY

THE AUTHOR,

FROM A PRACTICE OF NEARLY HALF A CENTURY.

Captain Clarke, R.M.
"

EDINBURGH:
PRINTED BY M. ANDERSON, MOUND PLACE,
MDCCCXXXIX.

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TO

LADY GORDON CUMMING,

OF

ALTYRE, MORAYSHIRE,

THE FOLLOWING TREATISE ON FLY-FISHING,

AND THE ART OF DRESSING THE FLY,

BEING THE RESULT OF

NEARLY FIFTY YEARS' STUDY AND EXPERIENCE;

IS, BY PERMISSION,

MOST HUMBLY INSCRIBED,

BY HER GRATEFUL AND OBEDIENT SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

1st January 1839.

M842140

INTRODUCTION.

THE Author's motive in publishing this little Treatise is, primarily, to leave behind him a mark of regard and esteem for some excellent individuals, lovers of angling, ere he quit for ever the rapid streams, majestic rivers, and still lakes of his fatherland, with their bonny banks and braes. At the same time, he must confess he would never have presumed to have done so, had he not been prevailed upon by their repeated solicitations, from his diffidence in appearing before the public for the first time. He trusts therefore to their indulgence, in not criticising too severely his first attempt. That it will have many enemies from interested individuals, he is well aware, but the advantages accruing from its publication, will fully compensate him for disclosing minutely the art, from his practice of nearly half a century. Should his first Essay be favourably received, which he has reason to anticipate, he begs leave to intimate, that it is only the precursor of another, more copious, and of consequence more efficient work (it is also far advanced), from his having the assistance of the first anglers in the united kingdom; this being only his own practice, and no adventitious aid from

books, or otherwise. It will also be his study, that it shall occasionally be interspersed with anecdote and fun, not trite but original, to amuse the angler when in a recumbent position, waiting under a tree or hedge, for a cloud passing between him and the sun. He will now close this preamble by remarking, that it has been a matter of surprise to him, that although it is now nearly two hundred years since Isaac Walton published his *Complete Angler*, every one who has written on the subject, has been almost invariably his wily plagiarist, as may be seen by comparing the book of that truly excellent and worthy man, with the publications which have teemed from the press on angling since the above period ; and it may be truly surmised, that most of them have been written in some obscure garret in London, by authors who were perfect novices in that innocent, sublime and meditative recreation. When every other art has been progressively improving, that of angling seems to have retrograded, which can be attributed only to one of the following causes, viz.,—that selfish jealousy which some expert anglers in a great degree possess, in not disclosing their art ; or, perhaps, to that modest diffidence so characteristic in the generality of those who follow that silent and reflective recreation. The Author will now finish the Introduction, by assuring the reader, that if he pays the attention requisite to the brief instructions laid down, he cannot fail to be a complete angler.

THE

ANGLER'S DESIDERATUM.

1st.—THE ROD.

NEVER angle with a small rod, even in streamlets; you cannot drop the fly in with that precision and delicacy at a distance, a long one enables you to do. It ought never to be less than twelve or sixteen feet, not bending at the top, when held horizontally; but, on the contrary, standing out gracefully from the root to the tip, tremblingly alive to the slightest motion of the hand; vibrating and felt by it at every throw; it ought not to be supple in the middle, nor stiff at the root, as most of the rods are that are hollow for reserved tops. The best wood to make them of is hickory, that from some parts of the West Indies is supposed to have the greatest elasticity; but all of this wood, if properly made, are good. Lance-wood tops some prefer, but from experience I have found them not so serviceable as hickory, as they often break, apparently from the short grain of the

wood. With respect to the number of the joints or pieces, the more the greater convenience for carriage, but the fewer the better; that is, three than four, two than three, and one piece the best of all, as they injure the spring of the rod, which is well known to first-rate anglers. The colour of the rod ought to be sombre, so ought the dress of the angler. Nothing can be more preposterously ridiculous than wearing light-coloured clothes when fishing; those who do so, are always looked upon as tyros by deeply skilled anglers. The author has found it highly necessary to be very precise and explicit on this head, being well aware that a good rod is one of the most essential articles, and one which all good anglers take great pride in possessing; indeed it stands next in rank to fine tackle and flies. Observe, moreover, on this article, that the best rods ought to cost no more than from twelve to twenty shillings. Expensive ones, that is, those that are highly finished and finely varnished, are not the best, as the work required, and the ingredients used to give them a fine polish, make them fragile, apt to break, and often spoil a good day's sport.

2d.—THE WHEEL.

That termed a multiplicator, or multiplying winch, which takes up the line quick by internal machinery, has not been found so serviceable by great anglers,

as one quite plain ; they also make a disagreeable noise, which is heard at a distance, and not seldom causes unpleasant rencounters to the silent contemplative possessor.

3d.—THE RUNNING-LINE.

The best is silk and hair mixed ; the Author has now one of this kind, which he has used upwards of twenty years ; it is apparently as good as ever, although he has run hundreds of salmon with it, and some thousands of other fish. He attributes its preservation to having, on his return from fishing, always dried it in the air, or in the house, wound round the back of a chair.

4th.—THE CASTING-LINE.

It ought to be all of silk-worm gut ; some prefer hair, and say it is lighter, but this is a mistake ; it neither casts so good a line, nor can it be tapered off with such nicety as a gut one. Make it as follows, but do not twist it with a machine, as is generally done, which causes it to be much heavier and less pliable, than when twisted with the fore-finger and thumb of the right hand :—Begin with three strong gut at first, of the same thickness, perfectly round and smooth, the next three must be less thick, and so on for three or four lengths, progressively lessen-

ing the thickness of the gut. Next take two strong gut as thick as the three last twisted, gradually decrease for three or four lengths as at first, then take one strong gut as thick as the two last, lessening the gut the same way, for five or six lengths. The casting-line ought not to be knotted, but tied together with the finest silk, to admit the line going through the rings of the rod; fasten it to the running line also with fine silk. Made in this manner it will cast the finest line. *Note.*—*Loops* ought never to be used either to fasten on the casting-line, fly-line or hooks. Single gut ought always to be knotted, but never cast round with silk, as the knot, if drawn tight and cut close, is almost imperceptible, whereas, when cast round with silk, it is easily perceived. The reason the casting-line is fastened with silk is, that it may pass through the rings of the rod when landing a fish, to enable you to get close to it with your landing-hook.

5th.—HOOKS.

The best hooks are those made at Kendal in Cumberland—Dumfries in Scotland, and Limerick in Ireland. The salmon hooks of the Sister Isle are good holders, but have one fault—are heavy. The trout ones are also excellent, with this exception—they are so small at the end of the shank, particularly the midge ones, that when highly tempered they often break there, either in making the head of

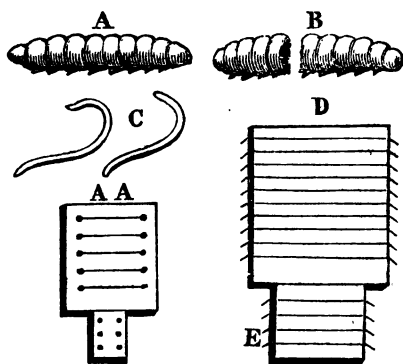
the fly, or when it is fished with in taking the hook from the fish. The bend of the hook ought not to diverge from the shank to the right or left. The hook, when dressed, will be better hid by the wings, and make less motion in the water, which will more than compensate,—the advantage some suppose the sneck bends have in taking hold. *Note.*—All hooks ought to be tried well on a piece of deal-board previous to fastening on the gut.

6th.—SILK-WORM GUT.

The following directions will be sufficient to enable any one to choose a good hank :—It ought to be perfectly transparent and round, without any flaws or cottony appearance intervening, from end to end. *Note.*—It is not more than fifty years since it was known in Europe what gut was. In general, it was conceived to be an Indian weed, till a gentleman named Oliver, a Scotchman, found it out to be the guts of the silk worm. Most all were sceptic and incredulous ; in order to convince, he gave them ocular demonstration, by making some in their presence. The following is his receipt, which I copied forty years ago from a small Treatise on Trolling by Robert Nobbs, Esq., A. M. It cannot but be acceptable to the angler ; good gut being so necessary an article, and so mainly conducive to his success in capturing the finny brood.

744.—METHOD OF MAKING SILK-WORM GUT.

Take the best and largest silk-worms you can procure, just when they begin to spin ;—this may be known by their refusing to eat, having a fine silk thread hanging from their mouths. The worms must be kept in some *strong vinegar*, covered close over for twelve hours, if the weather is warm ; if not, two or three hours longer will be necessary. When taken out, they must be pulled asunder, and you will see two transparent guts of a yellow green colour, as thick as a small straw bent double, the rest of the inside resembling boiled spinnage ; you can make no mistake. If you find the guts soft, or break upon stretching them, you must let the worms lie longer in the vinegar ; when fit to draw off, you must dip one in the vinegar, and stretch it gently with both hands to the proper length. The gut thus drawn out must be stretched out on a thin piece of board, by putting each end in a slit therein, and placed in the sun to dry. This is the real gut, and the mode of dressing it is the cause of the ends being always cramped. *Note.*—If your worms are good, and you follow this plain receipt, you may depend on having the best gut.



A Silk worm.—*B* Gut taken out.—*C* The gut.—*D* Board with gut to dry.—*E* Short gut.—*A A* Wooden pegs instead of splitting the board.

8th.—THE TINSEL.

Flat tinsel I consider the best ;—silver, for a black hackle ; gold, for a red one. Gold-cord tinsel, with yellow or orange-coloured silk in the middle, I sometimes dress with, to make a yellow or orange tip at the end of the fly ; which I do in this manner :—The cord is brought round spirally from the wing,—the dubbing having been previously put on half up the body, and fastened by the silk,—the hackle is then brought over and fixed,—the tip (of the hackle) taken off,—more dubbing put on the silk,—worked up to the tail, and fastened by one hitch,—the gold-cord is then brought to the same place, and fixed

by three hitches. Cut the cord off, leaving a little piece for the yellow or orange tip,—twist the gold off the cord, and the fly is complete. *Note.*—It is a very killing one,—trout take it fast, and when the rivers are very small, I have taken salmon with a midge-hook, dressed this way.

9th.—HACKLES FOR MIDGE FLIES.

Those from the back of the head of the red and black cock, of the game breed, are the best; particularly the Bantam cock, as they are finer. They ought not to be of a light colour underneath. A red cock that has a little black at the root of the feathers makes an excellent hackle and killing fly, with or without a wing. The top feathers on the head of the green plover are very fine; so are the tail feathers of the little wren also, with or without a wing. The neck feathers of all coloured hens are good and fine, but one side ought to be taken off, or the fly will be rough, which is always to be avoided.

10th.—HACKLES FOR LARGE TROUT FLIES.

The upper part of the neck close to the head of cocks and hens, generally one side of the feather requires to be taken off; the principal thing to guard against is, what I have remarked above, a rough and

coarse exterior to the fly, which is too often prevalent in those dressed for sale.

11th.—HACKLES FOR SALMON FLIES.

The feathers that gracefully hang down at each side of black and red cocks of the game breed; the same feathers from cocks of a light-bluish cast, and those of dappled-brown ones. The two last are much esteemed in the Highlands of Scotland, where keen fishers keep one of each, as they are often difficult to be found.

I knew an old Highlander a good salmon-fisher, who I have often seen in winter fishing with fly, search a whole district for a week ere he could get one to suit his fancy. He was the greatest enthusiast I ever saw, in every thing pertaining to angling, and I have met with many. He could or would talk of nothing else.

12th.—DUBBING FOR ALL FLIES, WITH OR WITHOUT THE HACKLE.

As so many kinds are used, I shall only enumerate those which I have found to be the best, viz.,—The fur of a hare-lug and foot; that of a water-rat and mole; the soft down of several furs, which ladies' tippets and children's caps are made of;—all

kinds of colours and shades may be found in them. Very good dubbing may be obtained from the hair which plasterers use to mix with their mortar. Swine's wool dyed yellow or orange colour, make good dubbing for salmon flies; it can only be got from them when dead, and that in small quantities. The furs and wools ought to be torn asunder, and intimately blended together, so as to obtain the desired colour. Yellow or green floss silk is often required to mix with them; likewise the finest wool of the same colours.

**13th.—TO IMITATE WHAT APPEARS LIKE HAIRS AT
THE END OF THE FLY.**

These, many anglers affirm, when imitated, are of great service, but I am sceptical as to that, for they adhere to the bend of the hook when drawn through the water; however, as they make the fly complete, and cause it to approximate more closely to the real one, I have put down what I once made use of to resemble them, viz., the hair of several animals, black, brown and grey; the coarse spotted feathers of the domestic drake, also the whiskers of the water-rat and mouse.

14th.—HINTS AND DIRECTIONS TO THE FLY-DRESSER.

The great error into which most fly-dressers fall, is putting on too much hackle round the body of the fly; this makes it bushy, unseemly to the sight, and far from the appearance of nature. The fish soon perceive its uncouthness, turn from it with loathing, and refuse to take the bait. I have often had ocular demonstrations of this, when screened from their view by a rock or tree, and on a fly being offered them not exactly to their taste. At a distance they appeared eagerly to approach, but when close to it, they turned tail in seeming disgust. The London dressers, and many others, have this palpable and glaring defect, which they copy from Walton. *Nota.*—Therefore, a trout-fly ought to have no more than from one to three turns of the hackle round its body; this makes it light and airy. As a proof of this, catch a water-fly, you will perceive the legs of it are invariably beneath the wings and shoulder, and never extend to the tail, a small part of them only beautifully projecting out under the shoulder and head.

It appears to me inexplicable, that so observing a poet as Walton was, and possessed of such a reflective mind, as his works fully evince, could overlook this, the more so as it pertained greatly to his much-loved meditative recreation. It is scarcely possible

to suppose but he must have examined, at the water side, the natural fly thousands of times with that precision necessary to imitate it.—Did he copy from the old school before him, as others have done since from him?

15th.—BIRDS WHOSE FEATHERS ARE MOST ESTEEMED FOR DRESSING FLIES.


The red and black turkey; the common and silver pheasant; the hawk, owl, moor-fowl and partridge; the wood-cock, snipe, golden and green plover; doterel, swallow, hen blackbird, thrush, corn-buntin, field-fare, starling, landrail, sparrow, wren, lark, wild-drake, teal, jay, king-fisher, bull of the bog, argus bird of Sumatra, jungle-cock of India, peacock, Guinea-hen, ostrich; all these I dress with. *Note*.—A number of foreign birds have very fine feathers; they may be procured at the shops where preserved birds are sold, as they import great numbers. Some are injured in putting up by the artists, which are disposed of at very reasonable prices.


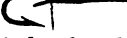
16th.—THE AUTHOR'S MANNER OF DRESSING THE ARTIFICIAL FLY, BEGINNING WITH THE SILK-WORM GUT, AND FOLLOWING UP THE PROGRESSIVE STAGES TILL FINISHED.


1st.—THE GUT.


Straighten it with a piece of India-rubber, or with your fingers, the first is preferable; take the finest end, flatten it between your teeth at least a quarter of an inch, this makes it lie close to the hook. If you intend to tie the smallest one to it, wax the part flattened; this will make it adhere firmly, take less winding of the silk upon it, and enable you to dress finer. *Note.*—By flattening the gut with the teeth it also makes it rough, and when tied on, it will break ere it comes from the hook.





2d.—THE HOOK.

Take it up with the left thumb and fore-finger, the bent part turned downwards to the left, the shank projecting out at the extremity of the thumb and finger; take the silk and twist it round the hook three or four times, a little from the end, give a hitch, which will fasten the silk to the hook. It will appear thus,—  Keep it firm in the same position, take up the gut, prepared as above, and place it under the shank of the hook, twist the silk round the gut and hook, six or eight times, and give it another hitch. The hook, silk

and gut, will then appear thus,—  Cut off the gut close to the hitch, it  will then resemble nearly a tied-on-bait-hook, thus,—

 Which finishes the first process.


SECOND STAGE.—Take up the tinsel, still keeping the hook as at the commencement, place one end of it close to the silk and gut on the top of the shank, the other end to the left, thus,—  Put it once or twice round towards the left; bring it back again; put the silk round it, and fasten with a hitch. It will then appear thus,—


 Then take hold of the tinsel with the thumb and fore-finger of the right hand, and bend it back and forward, which will soon break it close to the hitch, much nearer than it can be cut off. It will then resemble a bait-hook, with a piece of tinsel at the end, thus,—  bring back the silk, by two or three turns, to the right where you began, and give it a hitch. It will then appear thus,—  which finishes the second process.  It is now ready for the wing.

THIRD STAGE.—THE WING.—Hold the feather with the thumb and fore-finger of the left hand; cut off as much of it as is requisite (do not pull it off as some do, which injures it much), then take hold of it with the right thumb and finger, place it on the top of

the hook, the inside of the feathers turned upwards, open the left thumb and fore-finger to admit it, and press it close with them to the hook, twist the silk round both three or four times, and fasten by a hitch, it will then appear thus,—

scissors, and cut off the thick end, previously raising it with the thumb and fore-finger of the right hand,—turn the silk two or three times firmly round, just upon where you cut off, and fasten with a hitch, it will then appear thus,—


 Turn up the wing to the bend of the hook, with the thumb and fore-finger of the left hand, holding the gut tight with the right hand closed,—make the shoulder of the fly, by putting round the silk twice or thrice. Keep it tight (the silk) with the middle finger of the left hand,—draw up the wing with the fore-finger and thumb of the right one, keeping still tight the silk, which is round the shoulder, with the middle finger of the left hand, and bring it round in front of the wing once or twice, and give a hitch,—the hook will now appear thus,—

 Then bring the silk before the shoulder, where there is still the smallest possible part of the hook seen,—roll the silk over it and the gut two or three times, to make the head, and also the same number of times round the gut only,—bring it before the wing again, and make a hitch,—now take a needle, and divide the wing equally into two parts,—draw the silk through the centre to the right, between the shoulder and

wing,—bring it round and through the centre to the left, two or three times alternately, when the wings will stand in a natural position, and of course beautifully,—give a hitch before the wings to secure what you have done. It will then appear thus,—



ready to dress any fly.

FOURTH STAGE.—THE HACKLE.—Take it up,—trim it, by pulling off the herel on each side of the root,—cut it short, leaving only a small part for the silk to fix it to the hook, thus,—  Place it between the wings, fasten, by rolling the silk round behind the wings, two or three times, and secure by a hitch, it will now appear thus,—



Whatever kind of dubbing you intend to use, must be put on the silk, which now must be well waxed, for the fur to adhere to it; twist it with the finger and thumb of the right hand; roll it round the hook; should floss silk be used in lieu of fur, it must be tied on after the hackle, and put round before it. The following example will shew how the dubbing of a hare-lug is put on. Pull some fur off it—mix it well—twist it on the silk—wrap it half up the body of the fly, fasten by a hitch; then take hold of the hackle and twist it firmly round the fur in a spiral form, and fasten it at the place where the silk is, it will now appear thus,—



Take off the tip of the hackle by giving it a sharp twitch, which is much better

than cutting it off with scissors; put a little more fur on the silk, wrap it round the hook till near the tinsel; fasten by three hitches, and it is finished.

This manner of dressing a fly-hook makes it appear so true to nature, that when holding it with the tip of the wings between the finger and thumb, and looking at it even with a microscope, it will deceive many observers. The hackle appears beneath the wings and shoulder, the head projecting out, making the resemblance to the natural fly complete. This is the acmé of fly-dressing, which the author was taught nearly half-a-century ago, by Mr Walter Tait of Kelso, in Roxburghshire, the best dresser of a fly in Scotland. The advantages accruing from this mode of dressing are these:—It makes the wings stand better out; gives a shoulder to the fly the same colour as the wings, which the natural fly possesses; the head peeps out from the shoulder, thus resembling nature that nothing can surpass it.

ANOTHER METHOD OF PUTTING THE WINGS ON.
—Although not equal to the first, yet as it has novelty to recommend it, and may amuse some, I here insert. Take from the same bird a feather of the right wing, and one from the left to correspond. Cut off a piece of each, enough to make two wings; but avoid breaking the texture, as on this depends the beauty of the wings; put them inside to inside together; hold the hook between the thumb and fore-finger of the left hand; take up the wings with

the right thumb and fore-finger, place them between the thumb and finger that holds the hook; press them close, so as to keep them in the same state as when cut off the feathers; take hold of the silk with the right hand, still keeping firm hold of the wings with the left; give it three or four turns over the root of the wings, gut, and hook, and make a hitch to fasten; cut off the superfluous feathers, and form the head. They will appear so like a fly's wings that the most quick-sighted person will be unable to discover one from the other. *Note.*—Should the wings be too close, take a fine needle and separate a piece of each, which pull off or cut with sharp-pointed scissors. This is a very good way to put the wings on, but by no means equal to the first, from the fly having no shoulder.

16th,—SALMON-FLIES.

It has been said by all writers who have treated on this subject, that salmon-flies ought to have gaudy feathers and colours, with two or three wings; I can only say, I have never found them serviceable when I have fished, with the exception of some rivers in the Highlands of Scotland, which are dark from the tributary rivulets that run into them, having their source in bogs and mosses; but even then they will generally give the preference to the one dressed to imitate the natural fly; at the same time, I must

confess I have met with much success in that country, from flies I have dressed with brilliant colours, which I attribute to their being a change from seeing the others so often thrown over them, which, no doubt, at times gave them a touch of their sharp points. I never fish with more than two wings to the fly, as they prevent the wings playing, which is a great desideratum, and, in my opinion, a luring enticement for fish to rise. Of late years I have tried these gaudy flies in the clear rivers of the south of Scotland, and have found them sometimes take, but not so well as in the northern rivers of that country.

17th.—SALMON-FLY TO DRESS.

Dress them in a similar manner as the trout-fly, with this exception, that the hackle must be brought along the body to the end of it, with a tip of orange, yellow, red or blue wool, and the herle of a peacock or ostrich feather to make the head. But to be more explicit, and brief also, by not going over the whole *minutiæ* of fly-dressing, proceed as follows:—Whip the silk twice round the hook,—put the gut below it,—tie on and cut the gut close to where you fasten,—take a tuft of any of the above colours for the tip,—tie and secure at the same place,—bring the waxed silk down to where the wing is to be placed, and arrange it in every respect as directed

for the trout-fly. Then take the herle of a peacock or ostrich feather, wrap it round to make the head of the fly. The herle claps close to the hook when put into the water, and makes it look beautiful. Next put on the hackle, then the tinsel, then four or five peacock herles; fasten with the silk—twist a little of any of the above coloured dubbings once or twice round, close to the root of the wings,—bring the silk to the left where the tip is, and fasten; then take hold of the herles,—bring them up to the silk in a spiral form, and secure them by a hitch,—cut them close off; bring up the tinsel in a similar manner, then the hackle, and fasten also by three or four hitches, and it is complete. This is the author's way of dressing a salmon-fly, which he was taught by an old gentleman at Kelso, in Scotland, and since, he seldom dresses otherwise, as he considers it the best.

However, there is another method he sometimes practises, which is this:—The body of the fly must be dressed previous to the wings being put on, which may be done two ways, either by placing the whole part of the feather intended for the two wings, and cut a piece from the centre to divide them, or place each wing on separately,—both ways has the same effect in not breaking the texture of the feather. The feather from which the wings are taken must be placed on a table or board, the fore-finger of the left hand employed to keep it flat; then cut off across as much as is required with a sharp pen-

knife, which place upon the top of the hook, the inside of the feather downwards, fasten with the silk, and in doing so, be wary not to break the texture of the wings, as that would be an irretrievable injury, and cause you to commence again as at first. When the wings are put on and fastened, take the herle of a peacock or ostrich feather,—tie it on behind the wings—wrap it round to make the head—fasten, and it is finished. The wings stand well, and when in the water play to perfection. *Note.*—The great drawback to this mode of dressing is, the fly has no shoulder; however, the wings, as I said, stand well, and when in the water play inimitably. There is a way which some have introduced, that is, dressing on gut with a loop close to the head of the fly, for the fly-line to tie to. I do not approve of this method; loops ought never to be used, either on the running, casting or fly-line, or to fix on flies or bait-hooks; whatever agitates or increases the motion of the water, must be avoided. The flies dressed this way are certainly very convenient to carry in a box, and handy to put on at the water; but this does not in any measure compensate for their clumsy dangling appearance, in or on the water, with the loop and knot close to the fly. It has been said the fly lasts longer, no doubt, but the following simple method of strengthening the gut at the head of the fly, I shall here give as I got it from an old soldier, who kept it a secret, and never divulged it, I have reason to believe, to any other person. I had long

observed, on meeting with him at the water side, that his small flies, when closely examined, had something particular at the head of the hook ; his casting and fly-lines were wrapt round at the knots in the same manner. I inquired often what it was, but always got the same answer,—That it was someline to strengthen the gut. At last I asked him if it was fine white silk ? He replied, No ; it was a secret ; but he would divulge it to me.

The secret is as follows :—Take some of the finest ends of gut—it cannot be too fine—put them into your mouth—chew them a minute or two, then take them out—they will appear as if destroyed, not so,—pull them singly between the nails of your finger and thumb, which flattens them ; they ought to be damp when used, which is in this manner :—Make a knot at the end of the gut (not the one you intend to dress the fly upon), and fasten it to a nail or pin, take hold of the other end, and wrap the prepared gut round firm, leaving enough to tie the fly upon. This strengthens the gut, and it will never chafe, even with a salmon-fly ; the casting and fly-line may be done in the same way, which lasts much longer than silk, and it has this advantage, that it is almost imperceptible.

FLIES.

The following ones I have ever found the best, which fishers ought always to have with them, and

can never fail of success, either on the Continent or the United Kingdoms, in all waters, provided they are not over flooded, and even then, if a fish rise at the natural fly. This statement will, no doubt, surprise not a few brothers of the angle, as Walton appelles them ; but from fifty years experience I know it to be a truism. They are as follows:—

1st.—A red-cock hackle over a hare-lug, or peacock herel, black ostrich herel or yellow silk, with or without a wing or tinsel. Should the flat tinsel or cord be put round the body, it must be in a spiral form, and very few turns, as I do not approve of much tinsel, and in general, only put one turn of it at the extremity of the tail. The wings may be made from any of the birds mentioned in No. 15. Tinsel, gold.

2d.—A black-cock hackle or green-plover top, over a water-rat's fur—brown or yellow fur, or yellow silk also, with or without a wing or tinsel. Wings the same as No. 1. Tinsel, silver.

3d.—Wren hackle over brown fur or silk, with or without wing or tinsel. Wings from the same as above. Tinsel, gold.

4th.—Hare-lug, with gold or silver tip at the end—vary it by mixing green or yellow fur with it, or the finest wool of the same colours. Wings from the partridge, wood-cock or dotterel.


5th.—Yellow hackle, from a white-cock's hackle, dyed yellow, dubbing yellow silk, fur, or the finest wool dyed yellow.—Tinsel, gold tip. Wings,—lark, dotterel, or yellow feathers in the tail of the green plover, or the yellow part of the feather in the wing of a thrush. *1st Note.*—I do not put these in rotation, from their intrinsic merits in my estimation, as I have found them all equally good; Nos. 1, 2, 3 and 5, without wings, I fish with; as dippers they take well, and when the water is clear and small, they are excellent. *2d Note.*—For the bodies of flies, an almost infinite number of shades may be got by blending together the following colours, viz.,—blue and white make a lead colour—blue, black and white, an ash colour—blue and green, a violet—blue, pink and white, a light green—blue, white and yellow, a dun blue—black and red, a brown—black and white, a russet; in short, you may get any colour to imitate the fly on the water; therefore, by having a little of each fur in your dressing book, when at the river side, you cannot fail to be successful.

ON DIPPERS OR BOBBERS.

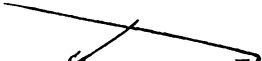
These I dress on short pieces of gut. In fixing them on the line, that nearest the casting-line ought to have the longest gut, the others progressively decreasing to the trail thus,—



This method of putting them on I found out many years ago, from observing the trout often miss the dippers on rising at them ; but very seldom the trail fly. I could not conceive the reason why for some time, till it struck me it was occasioned by their contact with the fly-line. I immediately adopted this mode, and found my conjecture right ; and as all the anglers I meet with tie them on the old way, thus,—

 I here give mine, which will be found the best.

Turn the bend of the hook to the left, take hold of the gut it is fastened to, place it along the fly-line, the end of it pointing to the trail-fly ; describe a circle with it, put the end over the circle and fly-line, bring it through and over twice and draw tight ; pull the knot so made down to that of the line, it will then appear thus,—

 cut close. This knot will never slip. I have caught many salmon with dippers tied on in this way. *Note.*—When drawn through the water, they never interfere with the fly-line like the old manner of fastening them on.

THE RAPID STREAM TACKLE.



Invented by the author twenty-five years ago. The fly-hook should be fixed on the end of each gut ; this

may be thought almost impossible for a midge-hook, nevertheless it is easily done by the following process:—Prepare the gut in the same manner as that described under the head of dressing a trout-fly, this makes it flat and rough; tie the first gut on at the end of the shank, half up the hook, then place the other in contact and fasten it on; bring the silk back again to where the wings are to be put on, and proceed to dress the fly as formerly directed.

Note.—This hook, if firmly tied on with the finest China silk, is as secure as if it had been fixed to one gut. Five or six hooks may be dressed on this line as they will never entangle. It affords glorious sport in rapid streams, or in deep waters when the wind is high. The fly-line will appear as if the hooks were all dressed on a single gut. I have never met with any since I invented it, who knew it, although I have fished in England, Wales and Scotland, and over part of the Continent.

THE AUTHOR'S FIRST TRIAL WITH THE RAPID STREAM TACKLE.

When residing at New Coldstream in Scotland, as a proof of its utility and advantages, I may mention the following feat which I effected by it, not one hundred yards from Coldstream Bridge. I commenced fishing at that place. I put on the rapid stream tackle, and filled a large fishing-basket in a

short time; sent the servant up to the house with them; he returned immediately; I filled it again and left off; went home, counted the trout on a green plat in the garden, found the number seventeen dozen and five, most of them good trout, not one salmon fry among them, and very few par, all caught in two hours and a-half; of course I duly appreciated my invention. I presume that this feat has seldom been surpassed in fly-fishing.

THE BITER BIT WITH THE RAPID STREAM TACKLE.

When residing at St Boswell's Cottage in Roxburghshire, I was angling opposite my friend Sir David Erskine of Dryborough Abbey with it, and caught a small par, when, on drawing it out to the side, a large trout took hold of it beneath the surface of the water, and sprung off like an arrow from a bow. I thought I had got hold of a salmon, it ran so strong without making its appearance. I was thus obliged to be very cautious on account of the smallness of the fly, which was a midge one. However, he was not long in showing his large head above the water, with the little par sticking between his teeth, shaking it most fiercely. Immediately on finding out what he was, I soon got him near enough to discern distinctly that I had perfect command of him, as, from his struggles, he had four or five of the midge flies attached to his sides and fins.

He weighed five pounds and a-half, and had, when opened, several large pars in his paunch, that he had devoured.

FLY-FISHING, IN A CALM OR IN SUNSHINE.

This mode of fishing is by dropping the fly in the centre of the circle a trout describes on sucking down a fly. It is a very amusing, as well as an excellent way of catching fish in a calm, sunshine, or muddy water, and even at night, if the circle can be perceived. Deep pools are the best; your fly-line must be of the finest gut, two yards long, tapering from the casting-line, with one hook attached to it. Keep a sharp look out for a circle to enable you to drop your fly with quickness and precision into the centre; when you attain this, you are almost certain of hooking the trout. It is often immaterial what colour your fly is, he being so eager to get another fly from so recently smacking his chops with the first dainty. The largest trout are taken this way. I remember well, when I was a very young man, but a knowing angler, fishing with some expert brothers of the angle, the sun was shining so vividly on the face of the water, that I left them and walked half-a-mile to a deep pool on the Tweed, where I continued fishing till their arrival.

“What sport?” asked an old major.

“Pretty fair,” said I.

"Where have you caught them?" inquired he.—
"Why, I have not seen you throw your line these ten minutes."

"No, indeed, but I am on the watch."

"For what?"

"Why, a trout taking a fly to be sure."

"What then?" said he.

"Why, in that case I am certain of him,"—with that one took down a fly, I was quick upon him, and brought him out. I immediately let him see what I had caught, the basket being nearly full of large trout.

"No, no; that wont do, you have caught them with a silver hook."

"You are mistaken, major," retorted I; "which you will be convinced of by adopting my plan;" he immediately did so, and soon had reason to alter his opinion of my having had recourse to the silver hook, from the number of trout in my basket.

THE LANDING-HOOK.

It ought to have a shank one yard long, in three pieces, attached by two joints, and slides made in the same manner as the slide or joint of a lady's parasol, which may be kept in the basket, and taken out when required, in a few seconds, and put up with one hand, while the other is employed in running the fish, or holding the rod. The landing-hooks

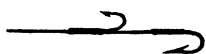
sold in the shops all screw on, and often take much time in finding and putting up, whereas those which I recommend, and have long used, require nothing but to draw the slides over the joints.

THE TICKLER

Is one of the most useful things to have with you when angling for salmon. It is a piece of lead, six inches long, formed like a pencil, which must be kept bright. The manner of using it is as follows:—When a salmon gets sulky and lies down, throwing in stones seldom moves him. Have therefore recourse to the tickler. Bend it round the top of your rod,—give it a shake, when it will run down the line to the hook, which will so surprise and confound him, when he finds his proboscis tickled, and put him in such a vagary, that he often leaps, tosses, flies and splashes; at this time, keep your finger off the running-line, and, if possible, stand opposite to him, with the rod almost erect; when you find him a little steady after this brush, endeavour to get his head down the stream, that the water may get into his gills and out at his masticators, which will soon nearly drown him in his own element, and make him call out peccavi; should the bank be precipitous, use the landing-hook, whip it into him, any where, head, back or belly, deil ma care, and secure the monarch of the flood.

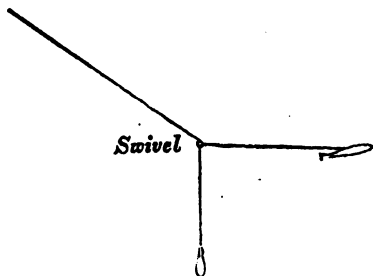
MINNOW FISHING.

The spring and autumnal months are the best to angle with minnow, as in those months they are scarce, while in summer they are so numerous that the fish get satiated with them. They seem to resemble the Aldermen of London; nothing will go down their maws, but what is dainty and difficult to be had. There are three ways of fishing with minnow; two with dead, and one with live bait. The following is my method, which I have found to be the best:—I fish with only two hooks, one large and the other small, but strong, tied on thus,—



Put the large hook in at the mouth and out near the tail of the minnow,—the small one hooking the lower and upper jaw, which prevents the water getting in; some employ a needle and thread for this, but the other way is more quick and efficient, and may be done in the dark, when fishing at night. The second way is to fish with one hook, as follows:—Enter the hook near the tail of the minnow, and bring it out at the mouth,—insert a piece of lead or a small pebble into the body to cause it to sink, and close up the mouth by a stitch or two of fine white silk or cotton thread. The minnow will then go head downwards; the trout, no doubt, take it for one that has been swimming upon the surface of the water, and eagerly take hold of it. This is a good way of fishing in

deep waters, and very amusing. There is no occasion for a swivel, as no motion is necessary for the minnow but one to sink and raise it alternately. The manner of fishing with a live minnow or small fish, I first saw in France and Belgium, and is much practised. The hook they use is a double small one. The minnow fixed to it a little in front of the back fin, a pretty heavy plummet, sugar-loaf shape, is attached to the extreme end of the line, which is of single gut, from one to two yards from the bait. To prevent the minnow entangling the line, a swivel is used, which revolves round the fine gut line as the minnow swims. This mode of fishing does dreadful execution. The tackle in the water appears thus,—



ON PRESERVING MINNOWS FOR FISHING.

The best way is the following:—Take a pretty sized tin-box, half fill it with the finest salt, and as you catch the minnows put them into it; close the box and give it a shake, which immediately kills and covers

them with salt. Exclude the air from them, they will keep several months, and appear as if just caught. This is a secret I had from a noted minnow angler. *Note.*—The artificial minnows sold in the shops are good for nothing. I have tried all kinds of them without success. Therefore, I conceive they are like the razors which the countryman bought from the rogue in the market, “made for sale, not for use.”

TO CATCH MINNOWS.

The quickest way without the net, is to fish for them with two or three artificial midge-flies, dressed upon double-nothings. The next best is with a piece of small red worm covering the point of the hook. I have seen many ladies very expert in this mode of fishing.

FORM OF THE TACKLE THE AUTHOR MAKES USE OF TO CATCH MINNOW.



Baited hook. Three hooks not baited.

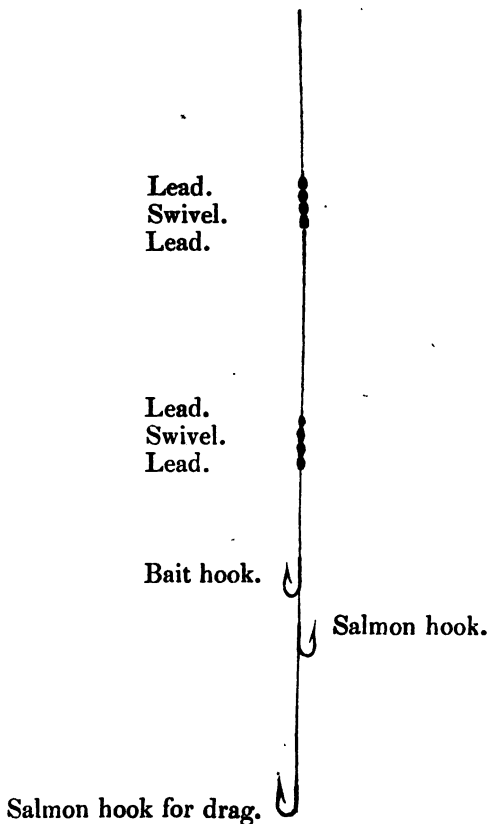
The moment you feel the minnow at the baited hook strike quick upwards, when you will generally capture two or three.

**TROLLING AND MINNOW TACKLE USED BY THE
AUTHOR.**

Some anglers use a number of hooks for this. I have seen four, five, and even six. I consider two only are requisite, and any more are superfluous, as they only make the deception more palpably seen. The best fishers I ever saw had no more, with one dragging behind bare, about eight inches from the bait, which often killed more than the two it was attached to, for when the fish missed the bait in striking, the drag almost invariably hooked it. This I know from long experience. The largest fish are caught this way, and I know some so passionately fond of this mode of angling, that when the water is in trim they never fish otherwise.

APPEARANCE OF THE TROLLING TACKLE, BEFORE
IT IS FIXED TO THE CASTING-LINE.

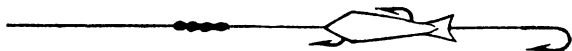
End of the Trolling Tackle.



The strongest single gut must be selected for this tackle. It is surprising with what avidity and force they take the lure, and when hooked, their strength in struggling is wonderful. *Note.*—I again repeat, that no loops ought to be used. Tie this tackle on with a double knot to the casting-line.

MANNER OF BAITING WITH A TROUT OR PAR-TAIL.

Cut a piece off the tail thus,—
Trim it by taking a little off at the
sides, put it on the salmon hook thus,—



Note.—The tails of many other fish are equally good to fish with. I saw a gentleman, when I was fishing with fly two years ago on the Tweed in winter, kill several salmon with young herring or sprats he had got from Edinburgh. I dare say never was such a thing done on the Tweed before. I suppose the salmon lives upon them when roving in the sea.

HINTS TO TYROS, AND THOSE WHO WISH TO COMMENCE, BY THE AUTHOR.

A thorough bred piscator minds neither wind, weather, hunger nor cold; is always patient, indefatigable, cool and collected; meets with reverses

like a philosopher, and ever cheers himself with the hope of retrieving at every throw, what has escaped, or others equally valuable, to compensate for his assiduity. Without these necessary qualifications, in a greater ratio than mediocrity, none need attempt to learn this truly pristine recreation. If they do, they are certain (and not seldom) of meeting toil, vexation, and trouble, with all their direful concomitants,—will soon lag, and in lieu of that calm serenity which all true anglers feel in enjoying this exhilarating pastime, their spirits will be eat up with ennui and spleen, too often accompanied with that bane of all happiness, envy of those who are more successful than themselves.

THINGS REQUISITE TO HAVE WHEN ANGLING.

As an angler ought never to depend upon any adventitious aid at the water side, the following articles, therefore, are essentially necessary, that he should always have in a pocket-book with him, viz., different coloured silk as fine as possible—a piece of pitch, or shoemakers' wax—a knife—a pair of dressing scissors—a hackle-holder, light, and not larger than a bed-curtain ring—not like the clumsy heavy ones sold in the shops—some hackles, red, black, and yellow,—a few herils of the peacock and ostrich feathers—some feathers for wings—a little of the different coloured dubbings—some gut—spare rings

for the rod, with a few hooks all sizes—also some strong black thread, to mend the rod in case of need. It is necessary also to have a small gimlet, in the event of your rod breaking at the top joint; this will enable you to clear the pipe, should the wood be left in it. I have seen many anglers at a non-plus when this has happened, and which, had they been provident, this dilemma might have been easily remedied.

TO STAIN GUT BY A SIMPLE PROCESS.

Put a little warm water into a basin, with a small piece of alum, and a few drops of ink; when the alum is dissolved, immerse the gut, and let it remain six or eight hours, and you will have attained a permanent and beautiful water-colour for your gut. Tea-leaves, and those of the oak, walnut, and many others, dried and infused with a little alum in it, will stain the gut any colour, and be equally lasting. *Note*—Some anglers think that gut, after it is dyed, is less durable; it may be so, but stained in this manner, I know, has no bad effect. At the same time, I must remark that I never could perceive any advantage coloured gut had over that used as imported from Spain.

OBSERVATIONS AND INSTRUCTIONS.

1st, From November to April, fish rise and bite best in the warmest time of the day.

2d, In hot days, it is immaterial what quarter the wind comes from.

3d, When the weather is cold and windy, angle on the weather-side of the river, as the fish lie there for warmth and quiet. But when the weather is warm, and a good breeze on the river, angle on the lee side, as the fish come to it to pick up the flies, which the wind drives over.

4th, In the spring, when angling for trout in very cold weather, even accompanied with frost and snow, they take the smallest midge flies,—*double-nothings* when the water is clear.

5th, When the day is bright and the sun gleaming at times, and the water very clear, always angle with dark coloured flies, the smallest you can dress, as it is impossible to imitate the natural fly; but the fish in such weather, *if the artificial one is large*, will discover it to be a counterfeit.

6th, In salmon fishing, keep the fly always in constant motion. At the head of a rapid stream, draw the fly against it; but at the middle and bottom of it, across, as I have observed eight times in ten, that they follow the fly, and take it in the act of describing the segment of a circle across the stream. Trout

also take the fly best when crossing the stream, not when drawn against it, as most anglers do.

7th, Immediately on hooking a *fish* (a term only used for a large one by brothers of the angle), lower your elbow, and push forward the butt end of your rod, which will cause it to stand almost erect, only a little bent at the top by the weight of the fish. Keep the line tight, but do not pull; if he runs out let go the line; should he struggle and leap, do not check him, but the moment he seems quiet, reel the line up, and keep it tight again, which will soon tire him.

8th, Fish the side of the river next you first (keeping out of sight), so far down, then return to where you commenced, and fish the middle, and as far as you can reach across.

9th, Endeavour to have the wind at your back and the sun before you, so that the shadow of yourself, rod and line, may not be seen.

10th, When a fish rises, strike quick, but gently, and upright when you can, keeping the elbow of your rod-arm close to your side, which will prevent you from breaking the line in striking.

11th, In fly fishing, keep as much of the line out of the water as possible, that it may not disturb the water and frighten the fish.

12th, In holding the rod, when fishing for salmon or large fish, place one hand below the reel, the other above it, encircling the line and rod, to prevent the line from running off the reel when throwing the rod. What is greatly conducive to suc-

cess in angling, is to cast the line, so that the fly may touch the water first, and the least possible part of the line afterwards. This art may be attained by paying attention to the following directions :—Hold the rod, as directed above ; stand erect ; should the right hand be uppermost, bring the line round the left shoulder with a sweep of the rod ; throw out and check it when nearly at its greatest extension, by giving the rod a quick jerk backwards, which will retard the line and propel the fly, and cause it to touch the water first. The body, in casting the line, ought never to be thrown back or forward, nor ought it to diverge to the right or left ; neither ought it, after the line is cast, to stoop forward, which appears awkward, and is not seldom ridiculed. In angling, you ought always to stand at ease ; the weight of the body alternately on the right and left foot. In short, I heard an accomplished Frenchwoman say (*in Scotland, where the first rate anglers are to be found*), that as much effect and elegance might be displayed in throwing the line, running the fish, and standing, in angling, as in walking a minuit, dancing a waltz or a quadrille.

CONCLUSION.

I am now arrived at where I intend to close this little treatise, which contains part of the knowledge I have acquired from a practice of nearly fifty years.

I have endeavoured to make it plain and easy to the reader; and I trust the new light which I have thrown upon the subject, will be favourably received by the whole fraternity of anglers, from the venerable, reflective, and accomplished veteran in the art, to the thoughtless, giddy and vivacious schoolboy; as both may be benefited and amused by its perusal. I will now, for the present, make my obeisance to the reader, and again intimate, that I intend to produce another piscatory work soon, (provided this meets encouragement), which will fully explain all kinds of bait and fly-fishing, *per mere per terram*. Nothing will be inserted in it but what I have experienced, or had ocular demonstration of, from the sportive minnow of the brook, to the voracious shark of the ocean. The anecdotes relative to anglers and angling, will be replete with harmless jocularity and fun, from the reminiscences of expert anglers, garrulous old soldiers, and sailors.

THE END.



